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ABSTRACT

Past studies on the sex-typing of occupations have used a single bipolar scale, ranging from masculinity to femininity. An empirical examination of both occupational sex roles and occupational prestige was conducted using two unipolar scales to assess masculinity and femininity. College students (N=183) rated 94 occupations, which were then characterized as androgynous, masculine sex-typed, feminine sex-typed, or undifferentiated, in addition to the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). Ratings of the prestige of the occupations revealed that androgynous occupations were judged to be significantly more prestigious. Results showed that sex role measures were applicable not only to individuals but also to the roles that individuals occupied. The findings indicate that the use of two unipolar scales permits a finer distinction in sex-typing occupations. (Author/JAC)

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# Occupational Sex Roles and Occupational Prestige

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Occupational Sex Roles and Occupational Prestige

Subjects rated 94 occupations on scales separately assessing the masculinity and femininity of each occupation. Using median splits on the masculinity and femininity ratings, the occupations were then characterized as being androgynous, masculine sex-typed, feminine sex-typed, or undifferentiated. Ratings of the prestige of the occupations showed that androgynous occupations were judged to be significantly more prestigious than were masculine sex-typed, feminine sex-typed, and undifferentiated occupations.

Past studies on the sex-typing of occupations have used a single bipolar scale, which goes from masculinity to femininity. For example, Shinar (1978) asked subjects to rate various occupations using a three-point bipolar dimension (masculine, neutral, feminine) and to rate a male or female target working in each of the occupations. Thus, for some targets there was congruence between the sex of the target and the sex-typing of the occupation (sex appropriate) and for other occupations there was incongruence between the sex of the target and the sex-typing of the occupation (sex inappropriate). Shinar found that the sex-typing of the occupation (i.e., masculine, neutral, or feminine) and the sex-appropriateness/inappropriateness of the occupation had strong effects on person perception regarding such scales as leadership, professional and intellectual competence, and individualism. Krefting, Berger, and Wallace (1978) found that the actual base rate of males and females in each occupation was the most important predictor of sex-type of the occupation as measured by a single bipolar scale. They also found that job content (i.e., whether

stereotypically masculine or feminine abilities were required to fulfill the occupation) made little significant contribution to the perception of job sex-types once the base rate had been taken into account.

The major problem with the studies by Shinar and by Krefting, et al. is that a single bipolar scale was used to assess the masculinity-femininity of the occupations studied. Researchers on the sex roles of individuals have asserted that masculinity and femininity are not bipolar ends of a single continuum but rather individual personality dimensions that can exist simultaneously within each person. Within this theoretical framework, four sex role orientations emerged: masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and undifferentiated. The use of two dimensions to assess the sex roles of individuals suggests the use of an analogous prodecure to assess the sex roles of occupations.

The present study represents an empirical look at both occupational sex roles and occupational prestige using two unipolar scales to assess masculinity and femininity. Specifically, we were concerned with the perceived masculinity and femininity of 94 different occupations chosen from the Statistical Abstract of the United States (U.S.Bureau of the Census, 1980) to be broadly representative of the different occupations in the country. Using these scales, it is possible to characterize the occupations as masculine sex-typed, feminine sex-typed, androgynous, or undifferentiated. We were further concerned with the extent to which the ratings of the masculinity and femininity of the occupations

corresponded not only with the prestige of the occupations but also with the actual percentage of men and women in the field.

## Method

### Subjects

Subjects were 183 introductory psychology students who participated in order to fulfill a course requirement.

### Materials and Procedure

In the first part of the study, 147 subjects were asked to rate 94 different occupations on two nine-point scales: one assessing the masculinity and one assessing the femininity of the occupations. In half the questionnaires they filled out, subjects were asked to rate the occupations on the masculinity rating first and in half they were asked to rate the occupations on the femininity rating first. Subjects also completed the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) of Spence and Helmreich (1978) at the end of each questionnaire and listed their sex, race, and age. These data will be reported elsewhere.

In the second part of the study, 36 subjects filled out a nine-point scale rating the prestige of the 94 occupations. They also completed a PAQ and listed their sex, age, and race. These data will be reported elsewhere.

## Results

The median masculinity rating of the occupations was obtained by adding the masculinity ratings of all of the occupations for each subject, dividing by 94, repeating this procedure across subjects, and locating the median of the resulting distribution. The same procedure

was to locate the median femininity rating of the occupations. Using these median splits, it was possible to classify the 94 occupations into four categories: masculine sex-typed, feminine sex-typed, androgynous, and undifferentiated. As can be seen in Table 1, most of the occupations were sex-typed either masculine or feminine. Also listed in Table 1 are the mean ratings of prestige for each of the occupations (based on the ratings of the 36 subjects in the second part of the study) and the percentage of women in each of the occupations.

An analysis of variance of the rated prestige of the occupations by the four sex types was significant, $F(3, 90) = 4.03$, $p < .01$. Androgynous occupations were rated significantly more prestigious ($\bar{X} = 7.01$) than masculine sex-typed occupations ($\bar{X} = 4.96$), feminine sex-typed occupations ($\bar{X} = 4.98$), and undifferentiated occupations ($\bar{X} = 3.89$) according to a Duncan's New Multiple Range Test.

## Discussion

This study shows that sex role measures can be applied not only to individuals but to the roles that individuals occupy. It also indicates that using two unipolar scales (masculinity and femininity) permits a finer distinction than other methods in the sex-typing of occupations.

The correlations between rated masculinity and rated femininity of all 94 occupations and the actual percentage of women in these occupations was quite high ($r = -.91$ and $r = .87$, respectively), providing support for the Krefting et al. finding that the base rate of males and females in the job is the most important predictor of job

sex-type.

Interestingly, of the three occupations included in this study and Touhey's (1974) study (professor, lawyer, and physician), all were found here to be androgynous. Thus, it would not be surprising that more recent studies of occupational prestige have failed to find that an increasing number of women entering these occupations lowers their prestige (Suchner, 1979; White, Crino, & DeSanctis, 1981). The next study to examine the issue of the effect of sex on judged qualification for an occupation should take into account not only the prestige of the occupation, as Touhey did in his original study, but also the perceived sex-type of the occupation as found in this study.

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TABLE 1



| Occupation | Mean Masculinity Rating[a] | Mean Femininity Rating[b] | Sex Type[c] | Mean Prestige Rating | Percentage of Women in the Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| accountant | 5.30 | 4.89 | U | 6.94 | 33 |
| air cond./ refrigeration mechanic | 7.75 | 2.06 | M | 3.67 | 0 |
| aircraft mechanic | 7.84 | 2.08 | M | 5.56 | 2 |
| apartment manager | 4.72 | 5.33 | F | 3.75 | 50 |
| artist | 4.63 | 6.23 | F | 5.86 | 38 |
| automobile mechanic | 7.73 | 2.39 | M | 4.08 | 1 |
| baker | 4.62 | 5.94 | F | 4.36 | 44 |
| bank officer | 5.66 | 4.98 | F | 5.39 | 32 |
| bank teller | 3.18 | 7.31 | F | 4.42 | 93 |
| barber | 6.47 | 3.43 | M | 3.39 | 13 |
| billing clerk | 4.58 | 5.53 | F | 3.56 | 90 |
| bookkeeper | 4.25 | 6.10 | F | 5.00 | 91 |
| brickmason | 7.96 | 1.82 | M | 4.03 | 1 |
| bus driver | 6.43 | 3.46 | M | 2.94 | 46 |
| butcher/ meat cutter | 7.45 | 2.49 | M | 3.08 | 7 |
| buyer(retail) | 4.90 | 6.44 | F | 5.17 | 40 |
| carpenter | 7.54 | 2.58 | M | 4.69 | 1 |
| cashier | 3.54 | 6.93 | F | 2.83 | 88 |
| chemist | 6.27 | 4.46 | M | 7.67 | 15 |
| childcare worker | 2.77 | 7.69 | F | 4.31 | 95 |
| civil engineer | 6.61 | 3.81 | M | 6.64 | 3 |
| cleaning service worker | 4.92 | 4.95 | F | 2.28 | 36 |
| college professor | 5.81 | 5.72 | A | 6.94 | 32 |

| Occupation | Masc. Rating[a] | Fem. Rating[b] | Sex Type[c] | Pres. Rating | Percent. in Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| computer operator | 5.59 | 5.47 | F | 6.97 | 62 |
| construction laborer | 7.96 | 2.27 | M | 4.00 | 3 |
| cook | 4.55 | 6.09 | F | 3.50 | 56 |
| crane operator | 7.84 | 2.10 | M | 3.36 | 1 |
| delivery worker | 6.23 | 3.34 | M | 2.89 | 8 |
| dentist | 6.44 | 4.39 | M | 7.78 | 5 |
| drafting engineer | 6.59 | 3.99 | M | 7.42 | 15 |
| editor | 5.48 | 5.50 | A | 6.94 | |
| electric powerline operator | 7.58 | 2.54 | M | 5.06 | 1 |
| electical engineer | 7.18 | 3.06 | M | 7.00 | 2 |
| electrician | 7.44 | 2.54 | M | 6.08 | 1 |
| elementary teacher | 3.22 | 7.54 | F | 5.08 | 84 |
| entertainer | 5.18 | 6.46 | F | 6.86 | |
| farm laborer | 7.30 | 2.80 | M | 3.33 | 17 |
| file clerk | 3.27 | 6.67 | F | 3.06 | 87 |
| firefighter | 8.08 | 1.99 | M | 5.00 | 0 |
| garage worker/ gas station attendant | 7.25 | 2.01 | M | 2.54 | 5 |
| gardener | 5.23 | 4.74 | U | 2.91 | 6 |
| general practice physician | 6.26 | 5.15 | A | 7.80 | 10 |
| gynecologist | 5.10 | 5.97 | F | 7.57 | 6 |
| hairdresser | 3.05 | 7.67 | F | 4.66 | 89 |

| Occupation | Masc. Rating[a] | Fem. Rating[b] | Sex Type[c] | Pres. Rating | Percent. in Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| heavy equip. operator | 8.09 | 1.78 | M | 4.57 | 1 |
| high school principal | 6.30 | 4.94 | A | 5.43 | 36 |
| huckster/ peddler | 5.54 | 2.25 | U | 2.06 | 80 |
| insurance agent/under-writer | 5.86 | 4.43 | M | 4.83 | 24 |
| judge | 6.73 | 4.48 | M | 8.29 | |
| keypunch operator | 3.61 | 6.53 | F | 4.63 | 95 |
| kindergarten teacher | 2.50 | 7.94 | F | 4.74 | 97 |
| lawyer | 6.65 | 5.58 | A | 8.40 | 12 |
| librarian | 2.65 | 7.59 | F | 4.26 | 78 |
| livestock handler | 7.52 | 2.17 | M | 3.57 | 25 |
| machinist | 7.21 | 2.38 | M | 4.31 | 3 |
| mechanical engineer | 7.33 | 2.96 | M | 6.63 | 1 |
| obstetrician | 5.59 | 5.34 | F | 7.91 | 6 |
| office manager | 5.65 | 5.46 | F | 6.23 | 63 |
| painter (con-struction) | 7.18 | 2.77 | M | 4.20 | 5 |
| pathologist | 5.95 | 4.53 | M | 7.43 | 5 |
| pediatrician | 5.61 | 5.82 | F | 8.23 | 17 |
| pharmacist | 5.91 | 4.99 | A | 7.23 | 24 |
| plumber | 7.57 | 2.22 | M | 4.46 | 0 |
| police | 7.47 | 3.28 | M | 5.66 | 6 |
| postal clerk | 5.29 | 4.69 | U | 3.91 | 34 |
| practical nurse | 2.58 | 7.80 | F | 6.09 | 98 |

| Occupation | Masc. Rating[a] | Fem. Rating[b] | Sex Type[c] | Pres. Rating | Percent. in Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| professional athlete | 7.42 | 4.23 | M | 7.23 | 38 |
| public administrator | 6.01 | 5.10 | A | 6.23 | 27 |
| radio/tv mechanic | 7.02 | 2.78 | M | 4.91 | 3 |
| real estate broker/agent | 5.71 | 5.20 | F | 5.57 | 49 |
| receptionist | 2.28 | 7.93 | F | 6.86 | 97 |
| registered nurse | 2.49 | 8.09 | F | 6.86 | 97 |
| religious worker | 4.52 | 6.11 | F | 5.71 | 13 |
| reporter | 5.64 | 5.96 | F | 5.91 | 42 |
| restaurant/ bar manager | 6.26 | 4.65 | M | 4.69 | 35 |
| retail sales clerk | 4.49 | 6.18 | F | 3.83 | 71 |
| secondary school teacher | 4.17 | 7.12 | F | 4.77 | 51 |
| secretary | 2.19 | 8.16 | F | 4.51 | 99 |
| social/recreation worker | 4.08 | 6.67 | F | 4.57 | 61 |
| stenographer | 3.08 | 6.96 | F | 4.60 | 93 |
| stitcher/sewer | 2.33 | 7.65 | F | 3.57 | 95 |
| stock/bonds broker | 5.93 | 4.39 | M | 6.29 | 20 |
| surgeon | 6.95 | 4.37 | M | 8.69 | 2 |
| taxicab driver | 7.14 | 2.72 | M | 2.66 | 13 |
| telephone installer/repairer | 6.93 | 2.77 | M | 3.54 | 10 |
| telephone operator | 2.75 | 7.18 | F | 2.97 | 92 |
| truckdriver | 7.73 | 2.28 | M | 2.89 | 2 |

| Occupation | Masc. Rating[a] | Fem. Rating[b] | Sex Type[c] | Pres. Rating | Percent. in Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| typesetter | 4.47 | 4.64 | U | 3.61 | 29 |
| typist | 2.67 | 7.39 | F | 3.61 | 97 |
| U.S. mail carrier | 6.21 | 3.82 | M | 4.47 | 10 |
| vocational counselor | 4.98 | 6.15 | F | 5.42 | 53 |
| waiter/ waitress | 4.05 | 6.83 | F | 2.81 | 89 |
| welder | 7.36 | 2.41 | M | 3.94 | 5 |
| writer | 5.07 | 6.15 | F | 6.69 | |

[a]Across all occupations, the median masculinity rating was 5.79.

[b]Across all occupations, the median femininity rating was 4.90.

[c]A = Androgynous, M = Masculine Sex-Typed, F = Feminine Sex-Typed, U = Undifferentiated